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A BALISTES VETULA TOPOTYPE FROM ASCENSION.

Through the kindness of Major H. N. Benett, R. M. I., Commandant of H. M. Island Ascension in the tropical Atlantic, we have had the pleasure of examining a topotypical example of the trigger fish, *Balistes vetula* Linnaeus. Reference to this fish was made by the writers in 1914, in connection with the description of a new race of the species from Trinidad Islet in latitude 20 south (Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist., Vol. XXXIII, pp. 265-266). At that time we knew of no specimen in America of *Balistes vetula* from the type locality, and in describing the subspecies *trinitatis,* which obviously differed from the West Indian form, we stated that the former might possibly prove to be identical with Linnaeus's *B. vetula* of Ascension, in which case a new name should be sought for the well-known representative of West Indian waters. Major Benett generously agreed to assist in settling the problem, and in due course an adult specimen preserved in formalin has reached us, and has been catalogued as number 553 in the collection of the Brooklyn Museum.

We have compared the Ascension Island fish with the type of *trinitatis* which it almost exactly equals in size (being 380 mm. long to base of caudal) as follows: Head, 3.0 in length to base of caudal; depth, 2.0; thickness of body, 2.0 in head. Head bluntly pointed, dorsal and ventral outlines similarly

oblique, both gently arched. Dorsal soft rays 31, anal 29. A line drawn from the origin of the soft dorsal to the origin of the anal would cut the lengthwise axis of the body a distance before the base of the caudal contained 2.4 times in the length to base of caudal. The stripes on the head are like those of the West Indian fish.

Although somewhat intermediate, the Ascension specimen is closer to West Indian examples than to the one from Trinidad. From the former it is very probably not taxonomically separable. This is in line with our idea of the probabilities in spite of the greater distance of Ascension from the West Indies than from Trinidad, based on the probable distribution of a sluggish swimming fish of this nature. The Northwesterly trade wind currents would make it difficult for a *B. vetula* to reach Trinidad from the West Indies, and as, on the other hand, Trinidad fish would not drift north of Cape San Roque, *B. vetula* from that island would be pretty effectually isolated from the North Atlantic current circuit, whereas those from Ascension would be on the outskirts of the same.

The high fin-count of the Ascension fish places it with descriptions of those from the Indian Ocean, which may leave the West Indian form as *Balistes vetula bellus* (Walbaum). We suspect that if the West Indian fish is separable from the Ascension, the Indian Ocean one will be found to be so also. As far as is determinable from a single specimen, *trinitatis* is a valid race.

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FISHES FROM PUNTARENAS, COSTA RICA.

A collection of fishes was obtained from the Costa Rica government many years ago by the Commercial Museums of Philadelphia. Recently, having